<u>REMARKS</u>

Upon entry of the present amendment, claim 31 will have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer while several claims will have been amended for clarity. In view of the herein contained remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejection set forth in the above-mentioned Official Action, together with an indication of the allowability of all the claims pending in the present application. Such action is respectfully requested and is now believed to be appropriate and proper.

Applicants note that the cover sheet of the Official Action indicates an objection to the specification but no objection is contained in the Official Action itself. Thus, Applicants have not responded thereto.

In the outstanding Official Action, the Examiner rejected claim 31 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as anticipated by JONES et al. (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2004/0187249). Claims 16-30 were indicated to be allowable.

By the present Response, Applicants have, without in any manner acquiescing in the propriety of the Examiner's rejection, canceled claim 31. The cancellation of claim 31 is made only in order to expedite allowance of the present application in view of the fact that the overwhelming majority of the claims pending herein have been indicated to be allowable. However, Applicants expressly do not acquiesce in the propriety of the asserted rejection.

Applicants note the filing of an Information Disclosure Statement in the present application on October 6, 2005 and respectfully request that the Examiner indicate consideration of each of the documents cited therein. In this regard, Applicants note that while the cover sheet of the outstanding Official Action indicated the action to be

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final, the body of the action did not contain any indication regarding finality. Nevertheless, since the only action requested by the present Response is the cancellation of the only rejected claim and minor changes to the language of several other claims, it is respectfully submitted that even if the outstanding Official Action was a Final Rejection, entry of the present amendment is appropriate and proper. In particular, neither the cancellation of claim 31 nor the other minor amendments to the claim language clearly do not raise any new issues requiring further consideration or search and further clearly places the application in condition for allowance. Accordingly, entry of the present amendment and passage of the present application to issue is respectfully requested in due course.

In the outstanding Official Action, the Examiner set forth a Statement of Reasons for the Indication of Allowable Subject Matter. In this regard, while Applicants do not disagree with the particular features noted by the Examiner, Applicants further point out that each of the claims in the present application defines a particular combination of features and that the patentability of each claim is based on the totality of features recited therein. Accordingly, the reasons for patentability should not be limited to those features noted by the Examiner.

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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Applicants have made a sincere effort to place the present application in

condition for allowance and respectfully submit that they have now done so. Applicants

have cancelled the only rejected claim, have amended the language of several other

claims, and have responded to the Examiner's reasons for allowance. Accordingly,

Applicants have provided a clear evidentiary basis supporting the patentability of all the

claims in the present application and respectfully request an indication to such effect in

due course.

Any amendments to the claims which have been made in this amendment, and

which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon the prior art,

should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and

no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.

Should the Examiner have any questions or comments regarding this Response,

or the present application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the

below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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